

File

10 December 1955

Fingerprinting of Aliens

1. On 8 December 1955, I discussed the subject with Rolland Welch, Chief, Visa Office, Department of State, who advised that State and Justice are considering recommending approval of an amendment to the Immigration and Nationality Act waiving overseas fingerprint requirements for all aliens applying for non-immigrant visas. Mr. Welch stated that as a matter of fact, a law permits waiving of visas for diplomats, residents of the United States who are representatives of an international organization and holders of diplomatic passports and because of this, our enemies, the Soviets and their satellites, send all of their non-immigrants to the United States in possession of diplomatic passports either as diplomats or government officials, and that they have requested waivers of fingerprints. The requests have been granted so that in effect the United States is now waiving the fingerprint requirements for our enemies and compelling our friends to be fingerprinted. Mr. Welch stated that under the proposed amendment it is contemplated that no fingerprinting would be done by American Consuls overseas in non-immigrant cases, but would be done in all immigrant cases where the alien was entering the U. S. for permanent residence. Mr. Welch stated that he felt that the intent of Congress to preserve the internal security would be complied with even though such an amendment would be approved inasmuch as the Immigration and Nationality Act requires, and would still require, that all aliens who remain in the United States for 29 days or longer, would have to register as an alien and be fingerprinted.

2. It is my personal opinion that this Agency, if requested, should favor the proposed amendment if we are called upon to comment.

3. It is my recollection that the Agency took an unofficial position favoring such an amendment last Fall and so indicated to the Immigration and Naturalization Service when they asked for an unofficial position. I believe this was discussed at the time with Mr. Warner in the General Counsel's office.

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